x8g

piquant[82] — aspect of the whole business was formed by the efforts and odd movements of Mius and Fremont to get rid of the last bees, fortunately somewhat numbed by the night. Each of them had wrapped his head in a white cloth: the masquerade effect of those two men jumping about and gesticulating in the growing darkness considerably amused the maids and the children, and since no one was stung$_3$ the general good humor contributed to everyone's individual joy (or everyone's individual good humor contributed to the general joy — and so on—ridiculous sentences).

In bed before ten o'clock, I still read in bed some of the *Memorandum.* Sleep interrupted by rather long stretches of insomnia, during which my imagination gets excited and suggests absurd subjects of worry.

Awakening without any feeling of freshness; but I get up in a fairly good mood.

The sky, pure again now (it is two o'clock), was filled with cold fog this morning.

We send a telegram to Albert to urge him to come and rest here a few days.

Until lunch, correspondence and a short walk in the garden, during which I remove the caterpillars from the rosebushes.

Stretched out on my bed, read the article by Brisson on Labiche and, in this connection, reread *La Station Champbaudet** — ineffably stupid. Then, to put me in the right mood again, reread immediately afterward the last two acts of The Wild Duck.*

Read for three quarters of an hour to Em. some of the *Voyage dun Naturaliste,* but I do not know whether or not I can continue this reading, which, to begin with, takes me too far afield from

the thoughts that would nourish my work, and moreover fills me, fills both of us rather, with a sort of almost intolerable anguish.

Went out; should have walked; but am again absorbed by the garden, where I spend my time in transplanting the winter cuttings from the rosebushes and in trying to understand the nature of the amorphous animal that is called in this district "gray worm/* which this year is eating up all our salad greens, our strawberry plants, etc. . . . I spend an hour on this. There is a high wind. I am writing this in the avenue. I go back in to work. How late it is already! in the day and in my life . . .

In French *piqver* means "to sting."
The Champbaudet Station, a comedy by Labiche,